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Proposal to AlleghenyCONNECT Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development subcommittee

To provide some short-term activity that will promote awareness of AlleghenyCONNECT to the level of the classroom teacher, we are suggesting that we institute a system of opportunities for every district currently connected to AlleghenyCONNECT and equipped with at least one Polycom unit.

What?

- A set of vouchers that may be used for purchasing videoconference sessions
 - (trying to deemphasize the phrase “virtual field trips”)
 - proportional to district size, e.g., more allotted to North Allegheny than Cornell
 - valued up to \$500 each
 - requirement that teacher attends facilitation training (virtual/on-demand) prior to redeeming voucher

When?

- Initial announcements during role-alike meetings (Supts, Curr Coords, Tech Coords, CFF Coaches, Media Specialists, etc);
 - introductory “dog and pony” sessions offered via the Polycom technology;
 - expectation that vouchers will be used by May 2010

Where?

- Virtually, using Polycom equipment and bridging services by Chorus Call (local)
 - Jana Baxter will be the main trainer for sessions, most likely after school hours
 - Examining the feasibility of using IU personnel to coordinate/schedule/process/promote

Why?

- Each videoconference opportunity tied to curricular goal via training
- Create demand for Polycom units
- Heighten awareness of videoconferencing capabilities and benefits
- Allows entry point for discussions about sharing resources across districts
- Exposes students to new resources, creating positive pressure on teacher

Simultaneously, we would also initiate moderator training for the CONNECTLive web collaboration/conferencing system. Those moderators, in turn, would train others within their districts in the use of the system. Again, the goal would be to increase discussion of sharing within and across districts.